Red-faced Mousebirds had 10 (R. K. Brooke) and 2 Antarctic Pintado Petrels *Daption capense* had 15 instead of 14 (Bierman & Voous 1950). Broekhuizen & Liversidge (1954) examined the tails of 3682 South African Gannets *Morus capensis,* but make no mention of anisorectricial individuals, so presumably they do not occur (or very seldom) in this species. Odd numbers of rectrices are not rare in swans and some other birds (Newton 1896). C. S. Roselaar in Cramp & Simmons (1977) states that in the Mute Swan *Cygnus olor* and Bewick's Swan *C. columbianus* the number of rectrices varies between 20 and 24, but that it is "always" 20 in the Whooper Swan *C. cygnus.*

Newton (1896) suggests that since tail feathers are always paired, it seems reasonable to assume, where one of a pair is missing, that the germ of the missing feather has died due to injury. This seems indeed possible and could be the cause of the abnormality found in many of the anisorectricial birds at Nchalo and Mopeia; but it does not explain extra tail feathers.

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Address: Mrs D. B. Hanmer, Sucoma, P/Bag 50, Blantyre, Malawi.

Further examples of abnormal rectrices and a case of an extra primary

by David S. Melville

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Somadikarta (1984) reported the occurrence of additional rectrices, which he termed polyrectricyly, in 14 species of birds. However he overlooked a paper by Hanmer (1981), who has since reported (1985, this issue) that additional or missing rectrices were found in 0.55% of some 22,800 birds caught for ringing in East Africa, describing such birds as anisorectricial. Extra rectrices also have been recorded in various other species including Mute Swan *Cygnus olor,* Greylag Goose *Anser anser,* Canada Goose *Branta canadensis,* Wigeon *Anas penelope,* Gadwall, *A. strepera,* Mallard *A. platyrhynchos,* Capercaillie *Tetrao urogallus,* Quail *Coturnix coturnix,* Coot *Fulica atra,* Stone Curlew

Burhinus oedicnemus, Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago,* Great Snipe *G. media,* Black Guillemot *Cepphus grylle* and Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* (Snow 1967, Cramp & Simmons 1977, 1980, Ginn & Melville 1983).

In 1976 I found an injured first-year Black-eared Kite *Milvus migrans lineatus* at Kai Tak Airport, Hong Kong, which had 13 rectrices. This bird was kept in captivity until mid-1980 during which time it went through 3 full moults, the extra rectrix being regrown each time. On 30 June 1984 I found a freshly dead Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus* at Cliffe Marshes, North Kent, England, which was moulting into second-winter plumage (inner 3 primaries growing) and had 13 old, first-year rectrices.

Cases of ''extra'' primaries are much less common than those of extra rectrices (Stresemann 1963, Snow 1967). On 24 February 1981 I caught a Red-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis* at Samut Sakhan, near Bangkok, Thailand. The bird was in primary moult, the outer 2 primaries (9 and 10) still growing, and both wings had a remicle. The left wing had 8 fully grown, slightly worn, inner primaries, but the right wing had 9. The extra primary in the right wing appeared to be between the third and fourth primaries (descendant) where the feathers were crowded, all other primaries being normally spaced. The bird was ringed and released.

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Address: David S. Melville, WWF Hong Kong, GPO Box 12721, Hong Kong.

Notes on the birds of Gau Island, Fiji

by Dick Watling

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Gau Island lies only 80 km from Suva, Fiji's capital on the island of Viti Levu, yet its birds have been very poorly studied and have never been comprehensively listed. There are only 4 records of ornithological work on the island. HMS 'Herald', undertaking a cartographical survey visited the island twice, September-November 1854 and September-October 1855. John MacGillivray was the vessel's naturalist in 1854, but he was dismissed early in 1855 when the 'Herald' was in Sydney (A. C. David). On the subsequent visit the Medical Officer, Dr F. M. Rayner had assumed responsibility as naturalist. There are 3 separate registrations at the British Museum containing birds